



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/820,525	04/07/2004	Qingguo Wu	NOVLP091/002889	8337
83422	7590	08/07/2009	EXAMINER	
Weaver Austin Villeneuve & Sampson LLP - NOVL			MALDONADO, JULIO J	
Attn.: Novellus Systems, Inc.				
P.O. Box 70250			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
Oakland, CA 94612-0250			2823	
			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			08/07/2009	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/820,525	WU ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	JULIO J. MALDONADO	2823	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 March 2009.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-9, 12-17, 19-31, 34 and 35 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-9, 12-17, 19-31, 34 and 35 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ . |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ . |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 03/04/2009 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-9, 12-17, 19-31, 34 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hyodo et al. (U.S. 7,064,088 B2, hereinafter Hyodo) in view of Chooi et al. (U.S. 6,436,824 B1, hereinafter Chooi).

In reference to claims 1, 12, 17, 19, 24, 34 and 35, Hyodo teaches a method of forming a low-k dielectric layer to reduce capacitance in multi layered wiring structures (Hyodo, column 1, lines 29 – 37) including the steps of providing a substrate in a deposition chamber (Hyodo, column 11, lines 2 – 5); providing a precursor to the deposition chamber (Hyodo, column 4, lines 9 – 12); igniting and maintaining a plasma

in a deposition chamber using radio frequency power having high frequency and low frequency components (Hyodo, column 13, lines 13 – 19), wherein about 1%-50% percent of total radio frequency power is provided by the low frequency component (Hyodo, column 13, lines 29 – 32), which has a frequency of between about 2 MHz or less (Hyodo, column 13, lines 32 – 33); and depositing the low-k dielectric layer (Hyodo, column 4, lines 13 – 17) under conditions in which the dielectric layer has a stress labeled residual tensile or compressive stress of about 0 to about 300 MPa and wherein the dielectric constant of the carbon doped oxide dielectric layer is less than 4 (Hyodo, column 14, lines 65 – 67).

Hyodo further discloses controlling low frequency power to control the stress within said layer (Hyodo, column 3, lines 31 – 34), controlling the residence time of said precursor to control the dielectric constant (Hyodo, column 9, lines 41 - 45) and adding additive gases to optimize the stress within said layer (Hyodo, column 13, lines 51 - 58).

Hyodo fails to expressly disclose wherein at least about 2 percent of total radio frequency power is provided by the low frequency component, which has a frequency of between about 100kHz and 600kHz, wherein the dielectric layer has a compressive stress less than about 35 MPa and wherein the dielectric constant is not greater than 3.

However, in the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art” a prima facie case of obviousness exists. MPEP 2144.05. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to enable using the process disclosed in Hyodo to form a dielectric

layer at the overlapping low frequency, stress and dielectric constant to arrive at the claimed invention.

Still, Hyodo fails to expressly disclose wherein said low-k dielectric layer is a carbon doped oxide dielectric layer.

However, Hyodo teaches wherein said precursor comprises a silicon-containing hydrocarbon compounds having the general formula $\text{Si}_\alpha\text{O}_\beta\text{C}_\gamma\text{H}_\gamma$, wherein α , β , γ and γ are integers (Hyodo, column 4, lines 35 – 36), wherein said silicon containing hydrocarbon comprises cyclic compounds having c=c bonds (i.e., unsaturated) (Hyodo, column 5, line 15 – column 6, line 20), linear compounds having c=c bonds (i.e., unsaturated) (Hyodo, column 6, line 29 – column 8, line 40). Furthermore, Hyodo teaches wherein said precursor further includes an additive gas such as ethene (C_2H_4) (Hyodo, column 13, lines 51 – 67) and a carrier gas selected from the group consisting of N_2 , He, Ne and Ar (Hyodo, column 13, lines 41 – 42).

Having this in mind, the disclosed specification teaches wherein the precursors comprise silanes, alkylsilanes, alkoxy silanes, and cyclic siloxanes (page 12, paragraph [0047]) and small molecules having 2 to 6 carbon atoms and one or more carbon-carbon double bonds or carbon-carbon triple bonds (page 14, paragraph [0068]).

Therefore, in light of the specification, the precursors of Hyodo are labeled carbon doped precursors and the dielectric layer of Hyodo is labeled a carbon doped dielectric layer.

Therefore, Hyodo teaches the same materials (i.e., unsaturated silicon-containing hydrocarbon precursors) and said materials are treated the same way (i.e.,

plasma deposition process at overlapping conditions), the low-k dielectric layer is labeled carbon doped oxide dielectric layer.

Hyodo substantially teaches all aspects of the invention including wherein the carbon doped oxide precursor has the general formula $\text{Si}_\alpha\text{O}_{\alpha-1}\text{R}_{2\alpha-\beta+2}(\text{OR}')_\beta$, wherein α is an integer of 1-3, β can be 0 and R is C₁₋₆ hydrocarbon attached to Si and R' is C₁₋₆ unattached to Si. Hyodo fails to disclose wherein the carbon doped oxide precursor comprises at least one carbon-carbon triple bond, such as propargyltrimethylsilane.

However, Chooi teaches a related method to form dielectric layers teaches providing a substrate in a CVD chamber; introducing organosilicon precursor into the chamber; and depositing said dielectric layer, wherein said organosilicon precursor is selected from a group including propargyltrimethylsilane (Chooi, column 3, lines 33 - 65).

It would have been within the scope of one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of Hyodo and Chooi to enable forming the dielectric layer of Hyodo using the propargyltrimethylsilane as taught by Chooi because one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to look to analogous art teaching alternative suitable or useful methods and materials to form the dielectric layer of Hyodo and art recognized suitability for an intended purpose has been recognized to be motivation to combine. MPEP 2144.07. Furthermore, the fact that the claimed combination of elements was “obvious to try” might show that such combination was obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103, since, if there is design need or market pressure to solve problem, and there are finite number of identified, predictable solutions, person of ordinary skill in art has good

reason to pursue known options within his or her technical grasp, and if this leads to anticipated success, it is likely product of ordinary skill and common sense, not innovation. KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc., 82 USPQ2d 1385 (U.S. 2007).

Still, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi fail to expressly disclose wherein the deposited carbon doped dielectric layer has a carbon-carbon triple bond to silicon oxide bond ratio of about 0.05% to 20% based on FTIR peak area. However, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach wherein one of the reactants used is propargyltrimethylsilane (Chooi, column 3, lines 33 - 65), which is a silicon containing compound having a carbon-carbon triple bond. Furthermore, the same materials are treated the same way and therefore, the same results would be obtained. Accordingly, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach upon the claimed invention.

In reference to claims 2 and 20, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach wherein the radio frequency power has a high frequency component in the range of greater than 2 MHz (Hyodo, column 13, lines 35 – 36).

Hyodo in view of Chooi fail to expressly disclose wherein the radio frequency power has a high frequency component in the range of between about 2MHz and 60MHz.

However, in the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art” a *prima facie* case of obviousness exists. MPEP 2144.05. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to enable using the process disclosed in the combination of Hyodo

and Chooi to form a dielectric layer at the overlapping low frequency and having the overlapping stress and dielectric constant to arrive at the claimed invention.

In reference to claims 3-5 and 21, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach controlling the frequency of the plasma deposition process to control the stress of the carbon doped oxide dielectric layer (Hyodo, column 13, lines 23 – 36), but fail to expressly disclose wherien the low frequency component of the radio frequency power has a power of between about 0.02 and 20 Watts/cm² of substrate surface area, pulsing the high frequency component of the radio frequency power delivered to the chamber at a frequency of between about 500 Hz and 10 kHz during deposition, and wherien the pulsing has a duty cycle between about 20 and 80%.

However, the selection of the radio frequency power is obvious because it is a matter of determining optimum process condition by routine experimentation with a limited number of species to obtain a desired dielectric layer with a desired level of stress. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to arrive at the recited limitations through routinary experimentation.

In reference to claims 6 and 22, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach wherein the substrate is maintained at a temperature of between about 350°C to 450°C (Hyodo, column 12, lines 3 – 5).

Hyodo in view of Chooi fail to expressly disclose wherein the substrate is maintained at a temperature of between about 300 and 425 degrees C during depositing of the carbon doped oxide dielectric layer.

However, in the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art” a prima facie case of obviousness exists. MPEP 2144.05.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to enable using the process disclosed in the combination of Hyodo and Chooi to form a dielectric layer at the overlapping temperature to arrive at the claimed invention.

In reference to claim 7, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach wherein the substrate is maintained at a temperature of between about 350°C to 450°C (Hyodo, column 12, lines 3 – 5).

Hyodo in view of Chooi fail to expressly disclose wherein the substrate is maintained at a temperature of between about 300 and 400 degrees C during depositing of the carbon doped oxide dielectric layer.

However, in the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art” a prima facie case of obviousness exists. MPEP 2144.05.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to enable using the process disclosed in the combination of Hyodo and Chooi to form a dielectric layer at the overlapping temperature to arrive at the claimed invention.

In reference to claims 8 and 23, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach wherein the deposition chamber is maintained at a pressure of between about 1-10 Torr (Hyodo, column 9, lines 35 – 36).

The combination of Hyodo and Chooi fail to expressly disclose wherein the deposition chamber is maintained at a pressure of between about 2 and 20 Torr during deposition of the carbon doped oxide dielectric layer.

However, in the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art” a prima facie case of obviousness exists. MPEP 2144.05.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to enable using the process disclosed in the combination of Hyodo and Chooi to form a dielectric layer at the overlapping pressure to arrive at the claimed invention.

In reference to claim 9, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach wherein the deposition chamber is maintained at a pressure of between about 1-10 Torr (Hyodo, column 9, lines 35 – 36).

The combination of Hyodo and Chooi fail to expressly disclose wherein the deposition chamber is maintained at a pressure of between about 2 and 10 Torr during deposition of the carbon doped oxide dielectric layer.

However, in the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art” a prima facie case of obviousness exists. MPEP 2144.05.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to enable using the process disclosed in Hyodo and Chooi to form a dielectric layer at the overlapping pressure to arrive at the claimed invention.

In reference to claim 13, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach controlling low frequency power to control the stress within said layer (Hyodo, column 3, lines 31 –

34), controlling the residence time of said precursor to control the dielectric constant (Hyodo, column 9, lines 41 - 45) and adding additive gases to optimize the stress within said layer (Hyodo, column 13, lines 51 - 58).

The combination of Hyodo and Chooi fail to expressly disclose wherein the carbon doped oxide dielectric layer has a modulus of at least about 3GPa.

However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to control the radio frequency power, the residence time and additive gases to achieve the stress within said carbon doped dielectric layer because the goal of the disclosed process is the same as that of the instant invention, namely a dielectric layer with controlled dielectric constant and strain.

In reference to claims 14 and 25, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach wherein the deposition chamber comprises a showerhead that serves as one plate of a plasma producing capacitor and a grounded block that serves as a second plate of the plasma producing capacitor (Hyodo, column 11, lines 1 – 17).

In reference to claims 15 and 26, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach wherein a separation gap between the showerhead and the block is maintained at a distance of 24 mm (Hyodo, column 15, lines 8 – 9).

The combination of Hyodo and Chooi fail to expressly disclose wherein a separation gap between the showerhead and the block is maintained at a distance between about 5 mm and 100 mm.

However, in the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art” a *prima facie* case of obviousness exists. MPEP 2144.05.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to enable using the process disclosed in Hyodo and Chooi to form a dielectric layer at the overlapping separation gap to arrive at the claimed invention.

In reference to claims 16 and 27, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach wherein the carbon doped oxide precursor is selected from the group consisting of alkylsilanes, alkoxy silanes, linear siloxanes and cyclic siloxanes (Hyodo, column 5, line 15 – column 8, line 40).

In reference to claim 18, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach wherein the carbon doped oxide precursor is a compound having a carbon-carbon double bond (Hyodo, column 5, line 15 – column 8, line 40).

In reference to claim 28, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach wherein the substrate is maintained at a temperature of between about 350°C to 450°C (Hyodo, column 12, lines 3 – 5).

The combination of Hyodo and Chooi fail to expressly disclose wherein the substrate is maintained at a temperature of between about 300 and 350 degrees C during depositing of the carbon doped oxide dielectric layer.

However, in the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art” a prima facie case of obviousness exists. MPEP 2144.05.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to enable using the process disclosed in Hyodo and Chooi

to form a dielectric layer at the overlapping temperature to arrive at the claimed invention.

In reference to claims 29 and 30, Hyodo teaches a method of forming a low-k dielectric layer to reduce capacitance in multi layered wiring structures (Hyodo, column 1, lines 29 – 37) including the steps of providing a substrate in a deposition chamber (Hyodo, column 11, lines 2 – 5); providing a precursor having carbon-carbon double bonds to the deposition chamber (Hyodo, column 4, lines 9 – 12); igniting and maintaining a plasma in a deposition chamber using radio frequency power having high frequency and low frequency components (Hyodo, column 13, lines 13 – 19), wherein about 1%-50% percent of total radio frequency power is provided by the low frequency component (Hyodo, column 13, lines 29 – 32), which has a frequency of between about 2 MHz or less (Hyodo, column 13, lines 32 – 33) and wherein the high frequency is greater than 2 MHz (Hyodo, column 13, lines 35 - 36); and depositing the low-k dielectric layer (Hyodo, column 4, lines 13 – 17) under conditions in which the dielectric layer has a stress labeled residual tensile or compressive stress of about 0 to about 300 MPa and wherein the dielectric constant of the carbon doped oxide dielectric layer is less than 4 (Hyodo, column 14, lines 65 – 67).

Hyodo further discloses controlling low frequency power to control the stress within said layer (Hyodo, column 3, lines 31 – 34), controlling the residence time of said precursor to control the dielectric constant (Hyodo, column 9, lines 41 - 45) and adding additive gases to optimize the stress within said layer (Hyodo, column 13, lines 51 - 58).

Hyodo fails to expressly disclose wherein the dielectric layer has a compressive stress less than about 50 Mpa, wherein the high frequency power is between about 2 MHz and 60 MHz, and wherein the dielectric constant is not greater than 3.

However, in the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art” a *prima facie* case of obviousness exists. MPEP 2144.05. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to enable using the process disclosed in Hyodo to form a dielectric layer at the overlapping low frequency, stress and dielectric constant to arrive at the claimed invention.

Still, Hyodo fails to expressly disclose wherein said low-k dielectric layer is a carbon doped oxide dielectric layer.

However, Hyodo teaches wherein said precursor comprises a silicon-containing hydrocarbon compounds having the general formula $\text{Si}_\alpha\text{O}_\beta\text{C}_\gamma\text{H}_\gamma$, wherein α , β , γ and γ are integers (Hyodo, column 4, lines 35 – 36), wherein said silicon containing hydrocarbon comprises cyclic compounds having c=c bonds (i.e., unsaturated) (Hyodo, column 5, line 15 – column 6, line 20), linear compounds having c=c bonds (i.e., unsaturated) (Hyodo, column 6, line 29 – column 8, line 40). Furthermore, Hyodo teaches wherein said precursor further includes an additive gas such as ethene (C_2H_4) (Hyodo, column 13, lines 51 – 67) and a carrier gas selected from the group consisting of N_2 , He, Ne and Ar (Hyodo, column 13, lines 41 – 42).

Having this in mind, the disclosed specification teaches wherein the precursors comprise silanes, alkylsilanes, alkoxy silanes, and cyclic siloxanes (page 12, paragraph

[0047]) and small molecules having 2 to 6 carbon atoms and one or more carbon-carbon double bonds or carbon-carbon triple bonds (page 14, paragraph [0068]).

Therefore, in light of the specification, the precursors of Hyodo are labeled carbon doped precursors and the dielectric layer of Hyodo is labeled a carbon doped dielectric layer.

Therefore, Hyodo teaches the same materials (i.e., unsaturated silicon-containing hydrocarbon precursors) and said materials are treated the same way (i.e., plasma deposition process at overlapping conditions), the low-k dielectric layer is labeled carbon doped oxide dielectric layer.

Hyodo fails to expressly disclose pulsing the high frequency component of the radio frequency power delivered to the chamber at a frequency of between about 500 Hz and 10 kHz during deposition, and wherein the pulsing has a duty cycle between about 20 and 80%.

However, the selection of the radio frequency power is obvious because it is a matter of determining optimum process condition by routine experimentation with a limited number of species to obtain a desired dielectric layer with a desired level of stress. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to arrive at the recited limitations through routinary experimentation.

Hyodo substantially teaches all aspects of the invention including wherein the carbon doped oxide precursor has the general formula $\text{Si}_\alpha\text{O}_{\alpha-1}\text{R}_{2\alpha-\beta+2}(\text{OR}')_\beta$, wherein α is

an integer of 1-3, β can be 0 and R is C₁₋₆ hydrocarbon attached to Si and R' is C₁₋₆ unattached to Si.

Hyodo fails to disclose wherein the carbon doped oxide precursor has at least one carbon-carbon triple bond, such as propargyltrimethylsilane. However, Chooi teaches a related method to form dielectric layers teaches providing a substrate in a CVD chamber; introducing organosilicon precursor into the chamber; and depositing said dielectric layer, wherein said organosilicon precursor is selected from a group including propargyltrimethylsilane (Chooi, column 3, lines 33 - 65).

It would have been within the scope of one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of Hyodo and Chooi to enable forming the dielectric layer of Hyodo using the propargyltrimethylsilane as taught by Chooi because one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to look to analogous art teaching alternative suitable or useful methods and materials to form the dielectric layer of Hyodo and art recognized suitability for an intended purpose has been recognized to be motivation to combine. MPEP 2144.07. Furthermore, the fact that the claimed combination of elements was "obvious to try" might show that such combination was obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103, since, if there is design need or market pressure to solve problem, and there are finite number of identified, predictable solutions, person of ordinary skill in art has good reason to pursue known options within his or her technical grasp, and if this leads to anticipated success, it is likely product of ordinary skill and common sense, not innovation. KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc., 82 USPQ2d 1385 (U.S. 2007).

In reference to claim 31, the combination of Hyodo and Chooi teach providing a substrate to a deposition chamber (Hyodo, column 11, lines 2 – 5); providing a precursor to the deposition chamber (Hyodo, column 4, lines 9 – 12), wherein the precursor comprises a molecule having at least one carbon-carbon double bond (Hyodo, column 5, line 15 – column 6, line 20 and column 6, line 29 – column 8, line 40); igniting and maintaining a plasma in a deposition chamber using high frequency radio frequency power greater than 2 MHz (Hyodo, column 13, lines 35 – 36); and depositing the carbon doped dielectric layer while the deposition chamber is maintained at a pressure of between about 1-10 Torr (Hyodo, column 9, lines 35 – 36), wherein the carbon doped oxide dielectric layer has a residual compressive stress of magnitude of about 0 to about 300 MPa and wherein the dielectric constant of the carbon doped oxide dielectric layer is less than 4 (Hyodo, column 14, lines 65 – 67), and wherein the deposition chamber comprises a showerhead that serves as one plate of a plasma producing capacitor and a grounded block that serves as a second plate of the plasma producing capacitor (Hyodo, column 11, lines 1 – 17), with a separation distance of about 24 mm between the showerhead and the block (Hyodo, column 15, lines 8 – 9).

The combination of Hyodo and Chooi fail to expressly disclose wherein the radio frequency power has a high frequency component in the range of between about 2MHz and 60MHz, wherein the deposition chamber is maintained at a pressure between about 2 and 20 Torr, wherein the carbon doped oxide dielectric layer has a residual tensile or compressive stress of magnitude less and about 50 MPa and a dielectric constant of

less than 3, and wherein the separation distance is about 5 mm to 100 mm between the showerhead and the block.

However, in the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art” a *prima facie* case of obviousness exists. MPEP 2144.05.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to enable using the process disclosed in Hyodo and Chooi to form a dielectric layer at the overlapping low frequency and separation gap to obtain a dielectric layer with overlapping stress and dielectric constant to arrive at the claimed invention.

Response to Amendment

4. The declaration filed on 03/04/2009 under 37 CFR 1.131 is sufficient to overcome the Rhee et al. (U.S. 7,087,271 B2) reference.
5. The declaration filed on 03/04/2009 under 37 CFR 1.131 has been considered but is ineffective to overcome the Hyodo et al. (U.S. 7,064,088 B2) reference.
6. The evidence submitted is insufficient to establish a conception of the invention prior to the effective date of the Hyodo et al. (U.S. 7,064,088 B2) reference. While conception is the mental part of the inventive act, it must be capable of proof, such as by demonstrative evidence or by a complete disclosure to another. Conception is more than a vague idea of how to solve a problem. The requisite means themselves and their interaction must also be comprehended. See *Mergenthaler v. Scudder*, 1897 C.D. 724, 81 O.G. 1417 (D.C. Cir. 1897). Applicants declared having conception of the

claimed invention prior to April 11, 2003. However, exhibit A is dated 08/18/2003, exhibit B is dated 06/25/2003, exhibit C is dated 09/22/2003, exhibit D is dated 10/29/2003, exhibit E is dated 11/12/2003, exhibit F is dated 12/03/2003, exhibit G discloses a series of dates as early as 09/23/2003, and exhibit H is dated 03/29/2004. While the applicants declare conception of the invention before 04/11/2003, the applicants have not shown evidence of this. The related application data in Hyodo fails to expressly disclose a particular amount of stress. However, Hyodo discloses using additive gases such as H₂ to control the stress of the low-k dielectric layer (Hyodo, column 13, lines 51 - 58), which is used in application 09/243,156 (see page 22, lines 10 - 29, for example). Therefore, the same materials are treated the same way, and the same result would be obtained.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments filed 03/04/2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants argue, "...Review of the '239 and '616 applications show that the subject matter relied in Hyodo for the rejection of claim 1, namely the "hard film" having a dielectric constant of less than 4 and a stress of between about 0 and 300 Mpa (column 14, lines 65-67 of Hyodo) is not present in these applications. Rather these applications describe only the "insulation films" that are described in the Hyodo reference...".

In response to this argument, as mentioned hereinabove, Hyodo discloses using additive gases such as H₂ to control the stress of the low-k dielectric layer (Hyodo, column 13, lines 51 - 58), which is used in application 09/243,156 (see page 22, lines 10 - 29, for example). Therefore, the same materials are treated the same way, and the same result would be obtained. In re Heritage, 182 F.2d 639, 86 USPQ 160 (CCPA 1950), holds that where a patent refers to and relies on the disclosure of a previously copending but subsequently abandoned application, such disclosure is available as a reference. See also In re Lund, 376 F.2d 982, 153 USPQ 625 (CCPA 1967). It has also been held that where the reference patent refers to a previously copending but subsequently abandoned application which discloses subject matter in common with the patent, the effective date of the reference as to the common subject matter is the filing date of the abandoned application. In re Switzer, 166 F.2d 827, 77 USPQ 156 (CCPA 1948); Ex parte Peterson, 63 USPQ 99 (Bd. App. 1944); and Ex parte Clifford, 49 USPQ 152 (Bd. App. 1940). See MPEP 901.02.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JULIO J. MALDONADO whose telephone number is (571)272-1864. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 8:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Matthew Smith can be reached on (571)-272-1907. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Julio J. Maldonado
Examiner
Art Unit 2823

/Julio J. Maldonado/
Examiner, Art Unit 2823